

**AN ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN USING SIMPLE
PRESENT TENSE IN DESCRIPTIVE TEXT WRITING BY STUDENTS
OF MAN 1 (MODEL) BANDAR LAMPUNG**

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Abstract: The objectives of this research were to investigate how simple present tense was used by students in descriptive text writing and to identify the common error made by students' in using simple present tense in their descriptive text based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy. This research was designed in the form of qualitative research, especially in descriptive method. This research was conducted at MAN 1 (Model) Bandar Lampung.

The subject of this research was the students of class XI.A.1 which consisted of 33 students. In analyzing the data, the researcher collected the data from the students, determined whether simple present tense was used in well-formed or error by the students, identified the grammatical errors made by the students, classified the errors of using simple present tense in students' descriptive text to find out the frequency of errors, displayed the data, calculated the data taken, and made the percentage in each category.

The result shows that the students used more correct simple present tense than errors. The correct use of simple present tense was 73.81%, whereas the error in using simple present tense was 26.19%. Furthermore, the highest frequency of errors made by the students based on surface strategy taxonomy was omission error with 56 items (50.90%). The teachers are suggested to give much practice about the use of ending -s or -es in simple present tense in order to minimize the omission errors. Moreover, for other researchers, they can provide some techniques to increase students' mastery of simple present tense.

Key words: Grammatical Error, Simple Present Tense, Descriptive text

**ANALISIS KESALAHAN-KESALAHAN YANG BERSIFAT
TATABAHASA DALAM MENGGUNAKAN SIMPEL PRESENT TENSE
DALAM MENULIS TEKS DESKRIPTIF OLEH SISWA MAN 1 (MODEL)
BANDAR LAMPUNG**

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Abstrak: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk meneliti bagaimana simple present tense digunakan oleh siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif dan untuk mengidentifikasi kesalahan umum yang dibuat oleh siswa dalam menggunakan *simple present tense* di dalam menulis teks deskriptif mereka berdasarkan *Surface Strategy Taxonomy*. Penelitian ini dibuat dalam bentuk penelitian kualitatif, khususnya dalam bentuk metode deskriptif. Penelitian ini dilakukan di MAN 1 (Model) Bandar Lampung.

Subjek penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas XI.A.1 yang terdiri dari 33 siswa. Dalam menganalisa data, peneliti mengumpulkan data dari siswa, menentukan apakah penggunaan *simple present tense* digunakan dengan baik atau salah oleh siswa, mengidentifikasi kesalahan-kesalahan yang bersifat tatabahasa yang dibuat siswa, menggolongkan kesalahan-kesalahan dalam menggunakan *simple present tense* di dalam teks deskriptif siswa untuk menemukan frekuensi dari kesalahan-kesalahan tersebut, menampilkan data, menghitung data yang diperoleh, dan membuat persentasi dalam tiap kategori kesalahan.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa murid lebih banyak menggunakan *simple present tense* yang benar daripada yang salah. Penggunaan *simple present tense* yang benar adalah 73.81%, sedangkan kesalahan dalam menggunakan *simple present tense* adalah 26.19%. Selanjutnya, frekuensi tertinggi dari kesalahan-kesalahan yang dibuat siswa berdasarkan *Surface Strategy Taxonomy* adalah kesalahan *omission*, 56 (50.90%). Guru disarankan untuk memberikan latihan lebih tentang penggunaan akhiran *-s* atau *-es* dalam *simple present tense* agar memperkecil kesalahan-kesalahan *omission*. Selain itu, untuk peneliti lain, mereka dapat menyiapkan beberapa teknik untuk meningkatkan penguasaan siswa dalam *simple present tense*.

Key words: Kesalahan-kesalahan secara tatabahasa, Simple Present Tense, Text Deskriptif.

INTRODUCTION

In learning English, guidelines of School based Curriculum (KTSP) which is applied for all school levels in Indonesia lead the students to have real life skills. This implies that teaching English stated in KTSP in particular is to enable students to master the four language skills, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All of these skills are expected to be mastered by the students. Reading and listening are passive skills, it means that the students only receive the material. Whereas speaking and writing are active skills, the students will produce something in their learning.

In writing, the students still have hesitancy about grammar. Since, grammar is the basic elements of an area of knowledge or skill, or it is a set of prescriptive notions about correct use of a language. According to Murcia (1995:4) grammar is essentially about the systems and patterns we use to select and combine words. By studying grammar we come to recognize the structure and regularity which is the foundation of language and we gain the tools to talk about the language system. Grammar must be learned by the students who want to learn about language. It will be more effective to produce utterance based on the basic structure which they know (Nichols, 1993: 78). Moreover in writing skill, the grammar is really needed to be learned, because the mistakes made in writing seem so clear when someone writes it and will be read by the reader. Therefore, it is very important for the students to pay attention about grammar when they are writing.

As we know those English and Indonesian languages do not have similar structure in sentences. For example as comparison we can see that in Indonesian language we do not have to know about the form of verb but in English we have to know about the form of the verb itself based on the tenses. There is no change of verb form in Indonesia but not in English. It is in accordance with Setiyadi (2033:22), he points out that English tends to be very difficult to be learnt in Indonesia

because English has different grammar from Indonesian language which might be difficult for language learners to understand the system of target language.

As we know English has many tenses (e.g. present tense, past tense, future tense, perfect tense, etc.) that should be mastered by students, but because of the differences between Indonesian language and English, it gives the difficulties for Indonesian students in learning English tenses and using the tenses in writing. As Murcia (1995:4) said that teaching tense is one of the most difficult area of English grammar for non-native speaker.

Sometimes they make grammatical errors. Students often produce incorrect utterances. According to Dullay et.al.(1982:138), errors are flawed side of learning speech or writing. They are those parts of conversation or composition that deviate from selected norm of mature language performance. However, making error is fundamentally human in process. Therefore, it is possible for students to make errorsunconsciously when they were writing. By analyzing the students' error, it willll give the important role in giving the feedback for the teacher and researcher in order to evaluate and develop the material in teaching learning process.

The previous research done by Indarti (1998:5),showed that the students still made errors in the use of tenses. The reason was that the students were not familiar with English structure such as the form of verb, because they did not find such rules in Indonesian. Considering the background above, the researcher was interested ininvestigating the use of simple present tense and in identifying the grammatical errors made by the students in composing simple present tense in students' descriptive text. Therefore, the researcher entitled the research "An Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Using Simple Present Tensein Descriptive Text Writing by Students of MAN 1 (Model) Bandar Lampung".

METHOD

This research was designed in the form of qualitative research, especially in descriptive method. The method was intended to describe exactly a phenomenon or problem that researcher had seen. It meant that the researcher would like to investigate the use of simple present tense and to identify the grammatical errors in using simple present tense in students' descriptive text writing based on surface strategy taxonomy. In this way the researcher collected the data from the students' descriptive text writing and investigated them whether the students used correct simple present tense or error, and identified the errors based on surface strategy taxonomy in order to conclude the result.

This research connected to the second grade of senior high school year 2012/2013 in MAN 1 (Model) Bandar Lampung. There were ten classes of second year students. Then the researcher took one of the classes, that was XI.A1 to be investigated about the use of simple present tense and the grammatical errors in their descriptive text writing.

In conducting the research, the researcher needed the instrument to get the data to be observed. In this research, the researcher used the students' writing as the instrument to make a descriptive text according to the material that had been learnt before. To make the students not confused in determining what about they would write, the researcher gave three topics to be chosen by the students, they were "My idol in my life", "My Best Friend", and "My lovely brother/ sister".

The procedures of the research were determining the subjects of the research, administering the research by giving the writing test, analyzing the data, and finally reporting the research finding. In order to know the use of simple present tense and its grammatical errors in students' descriptive text writing, the researcher analyzed the result of the students' writing by collecting the data from the students, determining whether the use of simple present tense was used in

well-formed or error by the students. In this step, the researcher classified the use of simple present tense into a table whether the tense was used in correct form or error, identifying the errors made by the students. In this step, the researcher identified the errors in student' descriptive text writing by underlining the errors and giving codes, classifying the errors of using simple present tense in students' descriptive text writing to find out the frequency of errors. Each error was classified by using surface strategy taxonomy, and finally displaying the data, the researcher used the qualitative method to treat the data, then the researcher determined the most frequent up to the least frequent error type as the result of the errors in using simple present tense in students' descriptive text writing by using percentage, calculating the data taken and making the percentage in each category. In calculating the data in each error, the researcher employed the following formula:

$$P = \frac{n1}{\sum N} \times 100\%$$

In which,

P : Percentage of each error

n1 : Total of the given error

$\sum N$: Total of the whole error

By calculating the frequency of error, the researcher could identify the most common error made by the students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research had been done on Friday, August 3rd 2012 for XI.A.1 of MAN 1 (Model) Bandar Lampung. It required 90 minutes to administrate the students' descriptive text writing. Based on the data that had been investigated concerning to the correct use of simple present tense, it was found that most students were able to use simple present tense in their descriptive text writing. It can be seen in the table below:

Number of Students	Total Simple Present Tense	The Correct Use of Simple Present Tense	The Grammatical Errors of Using Simple Present Tense
30	420	310	110
Percentage		73.81%	26.19%

From the data above we can see that the percentage of the correct use of simple present tense was 73.81%, whereas the grammatical error in using simple present tense was 26.19%. It meant that most students were able to use simple present tense in their descriptive text writing. They had understood well how to use the form of simple present tense in composing descriptive text, it can be seen in appendix 1. Most of the students were able to add –s or –es in the verb when the subject was in the form of third person singular. The students also had understood when they should use *to be* in the sentence and when they should not use it.

Based on the result of the research, it was found that most students of X1.A.1 MAN 1 (Model) Bandar Lampung have used simple present tense correctly in descriptive text writing. It can be seen from the data taken, it showed that the correct use of simple present tense was 73.81%, whereas the errors in using simple present tense was 26.19%. It meant that there was more correct use than error use of simple present tense in students' descriptive text writing. Actually there were 420 simple present tenses with the correct use were 310 items and there were 110 errors in using simple present tense. It meant that the students have understood well how to use simple present tense in their descriptive text writing by following the form of simple present tense that had been given by the teacher.

The students also understood when they were using nominal (non-verbal) tense, they must add linking verb (in this case the linking verbs that usually used was *be*: *am, is, are*) since in nominal present tense there is no verbs in it, therefore it must be added by linking verb in order to make a complete sentence. For, a complete sentence has at least one subject and one verb. For example: *He is kind-hearted*

man in my life, he is tall, handsome, pointed nose, and white skin, Syifais my lovely sister.

Furthermore, The students also could differentiate between plural and singular form, they used *to be is* when the noun that the students explained were in the singular form and they used *to be are* when the noun that the students explained were in the plural. For examples; *His hobbies are swimming and playing football, Her hobby is cooking.*

Even though the students of XI.A.1 were able to use simple present tense in their descriptive text writing, they also committed some grammatical errors in their writing. To identify the errors, the researcher classified the errors of using simple present tense in students' descriptive text writing by using surface strategy taxonomy. To make it clear, the data gathered is shown in the table below.

Frequency of Grammatical Errors based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy

No.	Errors Based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy	Total Errors	Percentage (%)
1	Omission	56	50.90%
2	Addition	6	5.45%
3	Misformation	39	35.46%
4	Misordering	9	8.18%
Total		110	100%

Based on the result of the research, it was found that the highest frequency of errors made by the students based on surface strategy taxonomy was omission error 56 items (50.90%). Omission is characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in well-formed utterances. In this case, the students made a lot of errors in using -s or -es when the subject of the sentence was in the form of the third person singular. Actually the ending -s or -es should appear in the verb when the subject was the third person singular. For example; *she always make me proud of her, He always spend his holiday with our family, etc.* The students also omitted *be* when there was no verb in the sentence, it was called nominal present tense (nonverbal). For example: *My father very kind to me, his eyes very circle, etc.*

Furthermore, misformation with the total errors was 39 items (35.46%), it was the most frequent error in using simple present tense after omission. Misformation is characterized by the use of wrong form of morpheme or the morpheme of the structure. In this case, the students made errors because they did not master simple present tense in well-formed. It can be proved from the examples; *we often played in the square footballtogether, because I and his hobby is played football, she always to prepare breakfast for us, her hobby is reading, swimming, listening to the music, playing games in computer, watching movies, studying, and playing basket ball, etc.*

The appearance of misordering error there were 9 items (8.18%), was less than misformation. As we know that misordering is characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance. In this case the students who did this error only happened to the seven students. The students still committed misordering errors because they might be influenced by Indonesian structure where they placed the morpheme based on the order of Indonesian structure. For example, the student wrote *I very love him because he is my only one little brother.*

The least frequent errors that students made were addition, which were 6 items (5.45%). It only happened to the five students in the class (see appendix 4). As we know that addition is characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance. In this case, the students added *to be* in their sentences when it had been there the verb in it. For instance, *He is usually becomes a keeper, because he is fat.*

From the research finding, although the students of X1.A.1 used more correct simple present tense than error in their descriptive text, the errors that were made by the students should be clarified in order to know what the common error made by the students.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In reference to the result and discussion, it was concluded that:

1. The use of simple present tense in students' descriptive text writing of class X1.A.1 of MAN 1 (Model) Bandar Lampung can be seen from the result that the students used more correct simple present tense (73.81%) than made errors (26.19%) in their descriptive text writing. It means that the students have understood how to use simple present tense in writing descriptive text.
2. Even though the students have used more correct simple present tense, but the researcher still analyzed the errors made by the students based on surface strategy taxonomy in order to know the difficulties faced by the students, and it had been found that the most common error committed by the students in their descriptive text writing was omission (50.90%), from 110 items in the form of simple present tense, the students committed 56 items omission error. The students often omitted -s or -es in the verb which the subject of the sentence was in the form of the third person singular and also the students omitted *to be* when there was no verb in the sentence.

Referring to the conclusions, the researcher comes to the following suggestions:

1. The teachers should give much practice about the use of ending -s or -es in simple present tense and explain about how to construct sentences grammatically and appropriately to the students in order to minimize the errors especially in omission errors as the common error in this research, therefore the students can apply their knowledge of simple present tense directly in the real context of writing.
2. For other researchers, by seeing the type of errors in using simple present tense in descriptive text writing, they can provide some techniques that can be applied by students to increase the use of simple present tense appropriately in other cases of writing.

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